

Foreign Policy of India by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru

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India's foreign policy was lead from 1947 to 1964 under the supervision of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India. He is considered to be the sole architect of modern India. Apart from his careful handling of India's wild domestic situation in the years immediately after the Independence, Nehru's major involvement lies in the field of foreign policies. Although Nehru determined India's international profile as the foreign minister of India; still his foreign policy has been made subject to much controversy and debate, like his economic policies. In the perspective of India's newly found status as a democratic republic, Nehru's foreign affairs policies seem to be tremendously apt.

Communalism can be said to be one of the greatest international influences on Nehru, but Gandhi's ideals of Satyagraha also influenced him to a great degree. But he devoted himself to neither point of view in framing his foreign policy. He was a lover of peace and wanted to promote it throughout the world by establishing friendly relation with other countries. His foreign policies were considered by two major philosophical aspects.

- (i) First, he wanted India to have an individuality that would be independent of any form of overt commitment to either power union, the USA or the USSR.
- (ii) Secondly, he had an unshaken faith in generosity and honesty in matters of international affairs.

His first policy led ultimately to the founding of the Non-Alignment Movement (**NAM**). By doing this, Nehru kept India away from 'Cold War' or 'Bloc politics'. His second faith was terribly shaken by the Chinese attack of 1962, openly disobeying all the clauses of the Panchsheel or five-point agreement of 1954 between New Delhi and Peking. This breach of conviction was a major psychosomatic shock for Nehru. He was severely criticized by the people of India and may be partially the reason for his death.

Basic Principles of Nehru's Foreign Policy: During the period of India independence Nehru saw war and violent insurgency from very close accommodations as a freedom fighter, and he believed in neither. Therefore, in his foreign policies, Nehru tried to lead India in such a way, so as to navigate clear from any form of violence and militarism. He rightly believed that nation must invest all its economic and logistic resources towards development and not defense and armament. Just like his economic policies, which were non-committal towards any ideological position, Nehru wanted to bring in a healthy level of pragmatism in his dealings of India's foreign affairs as well. He knew that explicit commitment to any of the two major power blocs to emerge in the aftermath of World War II, would not serve India's path. He therefore wanted to step a third path, which was not necessarily the middle path. As a World peace or internationalism or foreign policy are as follows:

Anti-colonialism: In promoting world peace, Nehru declared that colonialism in any form anywhere is to be opposed to subjugation of a country by a colonial power which naturally invades the freedom of the former. A champion of human freedom, Nehru opposed colonialism in his foreign policy which was given high regards by maximum courier of the world.

Non – Commitment: Nehru's non-commitment was not seen sympathetically by any of the super powers of either East or West at its initial stage. However, the increasing popularity of NAM among various Asian and African countries and Nehru's growing stature as a statesman situation changed their views. India too benefited from this position. India managed to secure rebuilding grants from member countries of either bloc.

Nehru successfully mediated in the Korean War and the Congo problem, putting an end to a long and violent struggle. After this his status as an admirable and efficient statesman reached new heights. Jawaharlal Nehru's theory of ideological non-commitment in a world that was rendered dangerous by the Cold War was appreciated by one and all.

Anti-racialism: Racial superiority is to be given farewell. It was this racialism which led to the rise of Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy and both of them brought the world on the edge of a titanic war. That-racial superiority of the British people subjugated the Indians and made their life miserable. So, Nehru wanted to do away with racialism.

Panchasheel: On the eve of the Bandung Conference, Nehru in association with the Chinese Prime Minister Chou-En-Lai declared in 1954 the fundamental principles of international understanding and cooperation. Those are:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
2. Mutual non-aggression.
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
4. Equality and mutual advantage.
5. Peaceful co-existence and economic co- operation.

The term Panchsheel was officially used by Nehru at a state feast given in honor of visiting Indonesian President in September 1954. However, his principle of Panchasheel got a setback when China attacked India in 1962 and Nehru was severely criticized by the people of India. Anyway, the' Panchasheel principles of Nehru had been undoubtedly designed to promote world peace.

Non-Alignment Movement: The utmost success of Jawaharlal Nehru's non-committal international politics was the formation of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM). Nehru found allies in Tito, Nasser, Soekarno, U Nu and Nkrumah at a later stage in his formation of this new alliance. This alliance was not taken seriously in the beginning, either by the Eastern or the Western bloc. However, the significance of the alliance was soon felt. It was great test for his courage and it was soon found out that the NAM was not merely a passive platform of neutral and inactive nations. It had clear objectives that included the gradual decolonization of the world, and a strong statement that the member countries were not party to the ever escalating tension of the Cold War. The favored process of decolonization as adopted by the NAM member countries was one of discussion and peaceful agreement. On many occasions, NAM met with success, often under the leadership of Nehru. Whoever supported its cause were an ally and a friend. Nehru preached a policy of issue based alliance and not one based on political and economic dogmas. He was proud of being an Asian, and wanted Asian nations to be the primary determinants of their political fate, not always guided by Western forces.

Firm faith on the U.N.O. and Commonwealth of Nations: Nehru's unshaken belief in the force of international brotherhood was attested with his decision to continue with India's Commonwealth status. He was made subject to much criticism back home because of the support he extended towards the Commonwealth, particularly after the difficulty of the independence issue by the British government in the post-World War II years, leading to the unwanted partition. However Nehru, always the believer in peaceful alliances and solution of international affairs based on discussions, went on with his ideals.

Nehru had firm faith on the U.N.O. It was only because these organizations enabled the nations to arrive at a solution. Those organizations provided forums to redress the grievances of the people of the globe. By doing that, those organizations would bring peace among the nations. So, Nehru retained his faith on the U.N.O. and Commonwealth of Nations.

Kashmir Problem: Nehru's Foreign policies did not augur well when it came to deal with the neighbors. Kashmir was a everlasting problem, and he failed to reach any successful negotiation regarding Kashmir with the neighbor Pakistan. Nehru had an innate belief in honest fellow-feeling and political generosity. He tried to force a negotiation with the Pakistani government through the United Nations. But the Pakistani military rulers denied any peaceful settlement. The offer of a possible referendum was also taken off in 1950. After India's dogged denial of the two-nation theory, a result in favor of Kashmir in the Muslim dominated Kashmir would be a strategic disaster for India. The Kashmir problem remained unresolved, and not even Nehru's diplomatic proficiency could give any positive direction to the problem. It still continues to be the one of the key international problems in South Asia.

China Crisis: Nehru's foreign policies concerning China have been made subject to much criticism. However, even in this case, it was Nehru's faith in transparency in the management of International relations that is seen to be the root of all problems. Nehru was intent on a very deep and mutually valuable relationship between India and China. The five-point agreement or the Panchsheel between New Delhi and Peking initiated in 1954 was a result of these negotiations. However, China started patrolling certain parts of the Indian border from 1955 onwards. Delhi started negotiations to solve the problem in a peaceful way. India, under the leadership of Nehru

wanted to take one issue at a time and begin the discussions. The Chinese government, under Chou En-lai wanted to treat the border issue in its entirety at one go. It was gross violation of the five-point agreement. The Chinese denial for the negotiation from the International Court of Justice complicated the problem.

Amidst such tensions, the Chinese suddenly started a full-scale attack in 1962. It was a rude shock, not only to Nehru, but to the entire international society. The Indian military was unprepared and also unequipped. Both USA and the Soviet extended token help. Soviet was quite busy with the Cuban crisis, however soon after the problem subsided, President Krushchev did extend some help. American help was minimum, compared to the massive military help that was extended to Pakistan in 1954. On top of that, the Sandys - Rusk team visited India to hold talks in order to make India allow certain areas of Kashmir to Pakistan, a claim that was squarely denied. Nehru stood firm with this faith in the five-point principle. The international community stood by him, as China withdrew under growing international pressure, fearing isolation and global antagonism. Nehru played his last masterstroke in international policy, as he turned the military defeat in a moral victory for India.

The Chinese invasion had far reaching effects on India's foreign policy. It forced Nehru to change his stance on international affairs. He realized that utter goodwill was not necessary the way the business of foreign affairs was steered. Nehru's dreams were more or less shattered. It was also a great eye-opener. It made India to see that it is important to strengthen one's military strength and not overtly depend on peaceful negotiations in matters of international affairs. The Chinese invasion was a shock to Nehru, almost shaking his idealistic foundation to the very base. Domestic problems also kept escalating, putting a great degree of mental and physical stress on Nehru.

Nehru, the man and politician made such a powerful imprint on India that his death on 27 May 1964 left India with no clear political heir to his leadership. Indian newspapers repeated Nehru's own words of the time of Gandhi's assassination: "The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere." His contribution to India's foreign policy we may easily be trapped by a desire to reflect on and describe nothing but India's foreign policy itself. In paying tribute to

Jawaharlal Nehru, we remember a politician who, through his efforts in many fields, made an important contribution to opening up for his people the road to our present day world.

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